

AMENDMENTS IN THE SPECIFICATION:

[0006] In order to achieve the above object, according to the present invention, there is provided a washing machine, comprising:

a housing having a first opening portion;

a water tank which is placed within the housing and which has a second opening portion facing the first opening portion of the housing;

a rotating drum rotatably placed within the water tank;

an unbendable first door at least part of which can be accommodated in the housing and which is ~~slid~~ slidable vertically against the housing to open and close the first opening portion of the housing; and

a second door pivotably mounted to the water tank for opening and closing the second opening portion of the water tank~~at least one spring for biasing the door upward and braking downward sliding of the door.~~

[0007] In this washing machine, when washing loads are put in and out through the first opening portion, the first door is slid against the housing so that the first opening portion of the housing is opened. Therefore, unlike conventional pivotal-type doors, the first door never projects forward of the housing. Thus, there is no need for any large space in front of the housing, but a small empty space will do for use of this washing machine.

[0008] Furthermore, in this washing machine, the first door, when opened, is slid and accommodated in the housing, thus making no obstacle to the work of putting in and out washing loads through the first opening portion, unlike conventional pivotal-type doors.

[0009] Also, the first door is not grating-shaped, and unbendable. Thus, the first door never bends but slides smoothly, being so good at feeling and allowing noise reduction to be achieved.

[0010] Also, since the first door is unbendable, it never occurs that the first door is bent to collide with the water tank or the like. That is, it never occurs that the first door and the water tank or the like interfere with each other during the sliding of the door.

[0011] Also, in the case where the external wall of the housing in which the first opening portion is provided is generally arc-shaped in its cross section, with the first door generally arc-shaped in its cross section, the first door can be slid along the external wall of the housing so as to be accommodated in the housing.

[0012] Also, the first door may be located below the second opening portion of the water tank while the first opening portion of the housing is open. In that case, since the door is slid vertically, the empty space within the lower portion of the housing can be effectively utilized, allowing a downsizing to be achieved.

[0013] Also, in the case where the first door is accommodated within the lower portion of the housing, for example, the first door makes no obstacle to the provision of the display and operation parts on a top portion of the housing, so that the visibility and operability of the display and operation parts can be enhanced.

[0014] Also, the washing machine may further include at least one spring for biasing the first door upward to help the first door slide upward and braking downward sliding of the door. In such a case, since the first door is biased upward by the spring, the force required to slide the first door upward is lessened. Thus, the user is allowed to manually slide the first door upward with ease. That is, upward operating force for the first door can be reduced.

[0015] Also, when the first door slides downward by its weight, the downward sliding of the first door is braked by the spring, so that the first door slides downward slowly. Thus, the occurrence that the door ~~may~~ rushes and slides downward to collide with, for example, user's hands can be prevented, allowing the safety for the user to be enhanced.

Delete paragraphs [0018] - [0025]

[0026] ~~In the event that any foreign matters have entered into the accommodating portion, the~~ The washing machine includes the ~~may include~~ a cover which covers a front face of the accommodating portion and which is attachable to and removable from the housing. In such a case, if foreign matters have entered into the accommodating portion, the user is allowed to remove the accommodating portion to take out the foreign matters. That is, the washing machine can be enhanced in maintainability.